

# Find a Physician

What to Consider when Thinking about Building a Portal



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# Mapping East Coast provider portals for good practices

Recently we've expanded our focus to include East Coast providers that have innovative healthcare services and set out to explore the level of priority they put on patient-centric care. During our initial research, we picked 20 providers in the Massachusetts area to analyze.

We looked at their websites from the perspective of a patient searching for various information with the most important feature being the ability to find a physician. After inspecting 20 providers (including individual hospitals and hospital systems) **9 out of 20 had forms you could fill out as an option to request an appointment.** These forms were really outdated and confusing to use. On top of that there was no appointment button, so you would have to call the hospital to check the doctor's availability.

This sparked our interest to take a deeper look into other services and apps they had, eventually inspiring us to compile this white paper..

Technology in the healthcare field is rapidly expanding, so how come these providers don't have a **Find a Physician portal**, or at least some kind of online scheduling tool? This is not a question of innovation or progress, but rather a question of excessive amounts of paperwork, man-made mistakes, and non-efficient workflows which all lead to a lower standard of patient care.

Some of the complications patients encounter through a provider's call center or front desk are **busy signals, technological issues, double bookings or troubles finding a time that suits them**. If providers want to improve their scheduling process they should eventually switch to a Patient Portal app, either through just a web app or even better to have both options - a web & mobile (maybe even progressive web app - PWA).

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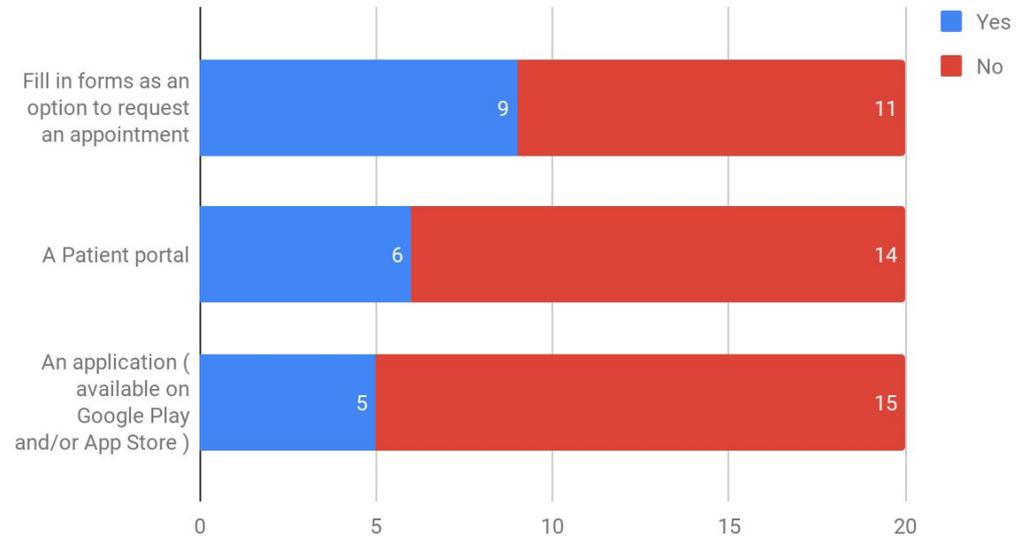
## The common issues of the patient experience

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# The majority of providers still have contacts forms instead of web portals

Only 6 out of 20 hospitals had a web patient portal, and furthermore, only 5 out of 20 had a mobile app available on the App Store and Google Play Store (while of course just having the apps is not enough and the adoption rates were low).

Does the hospital have:



Of course, aside from the problems we recognized with some of the providers, we also noticed some really great portals. They were very easy to use, intuitive and gave access to all the relevant data for the patient. Some of the functions that these portals include are appointment requests, lab results, prescription refills requests, the ability to receive messages from hospital staff, immunization records, and one of our favorites the ability to communicate directly with your doctor.

We believe that having a seamless patient portal is not a matter of luxury anymore, it is actually a necessity that can be afforded either through some ready-made options or the most optimal option: by building a custom one (which short term might be more expensive but long term is a cost-saving method).

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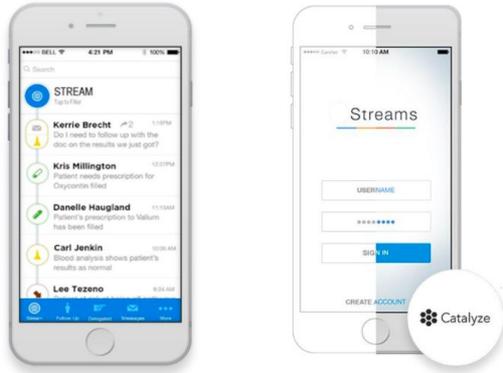
A fully functional  
patient portal  
should not be a  
luxury anymore

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# The joint effort of payers and providers

While working for payers for many years, we noticed that the tools they were using were poorly designed with performance issues, which led to a high abandonment rate. Some of the challenges members encountered were a difficult time figuring out which doctors were in their network and determining when those doctors were available, outdated info about location and phone numbers, insurances accepted and hospital affiliation.

Our solution was to develop Find a Provider App that offers prospects, members and physicians a personalized user interface (UI) for locating doctors, hospitals and pharmacies. The app also includes information about locations, medical plans, specializations, and working hours, along with other relevant information. We also re-architected the application to easily expand and reuse key functionalities.



On the other hand, we had to think about how to create an app for physicians that provides quick, shareable information, crowdsourcing, real-time communication, improves their practice and saves their and their patients both time and money. So we developed The Streams App which offers physicians a convenient, handheld snapshot of their patient population, with new information about their patients at a glance: new lab results, emergency room visits, hospitalizations and more.

Vicert created a mobile solution that is flexible, scalable and secure, and integrated with the fully HIPAA-compliant back-end product. We were able to offer a high-performance application from the start so future scaling would be effortless, in this way making it cost effective in the long term.

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## Streams - case study



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## How we can help

Patient healthcare access is ultimately rooted in meeting the patient's overall needs. By making oneself available to patients, providers can ensure that patients receive treatment regardless of their circumstances. In an industry that is increasingly consumer-centric, providers should consider adopting more flexible approaches, ensuring patients have abundant access to healthcare services.

If you are thinking about possible improvements to your engagement with patients, reach out and our engineering team can hop on a quick call to offer insight and advice for further analysis and design. Even if there isn't an opportunity to work together at this point, we believe an exchange of ideas would be mutually beneficial (and we love hearing about new innovative ideas).

# ENABLING THE DIGITAL HEALTH REVOLUTION!

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